

# British-Israelism Is It Christian?

A candid and courteous Discussion of the  
Theory that the British People are the  
"Lost Ten Tribes" of Israel

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This booklet has not been written in any controversial or antagonistic spirit. It is not an attack on anyone's religious faith. It deals with a theory, not with personalities. Most of those who hold the British-Israel theory are earnest, devout Christian people, deeply sincere in their belief, and thoroughly convinced that it is in accord with the truth found in the Bible. But believing they are profoundly mistaken in their views, I have sought to show that, however plausible it may seem to them, there are reasonable and Scriptural grounds for declining to accept their theory as sound or in agreement with the teaching of either Old or New Testaments. I would, therefore, urge them to study carefully every Scripture to which I refer, and to please keep in mind that my purpose is to help them get at the real truth of this subject. In the words of St. Paul I would ask them, "Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

A. E. C.

## INTRODUCTION

This is one of a series of pamphlets prepared under the direction of the Commission on the Christian Faith appointed by the General Council of The United Church of Canada. The purpose of these pamphlets is to provide brief and helpful studies of the Christian beliefs, and of the issues the Church now faces in her own life and in carrying on her work in the world. The pamphlets express the positions of their several writers, but they are commended as being in essential accord with the Church's outlook and as furnishing profitable instruction in the subjects with which they deal.

JOHN LINE, S.T.D.

*Chairman, Commission on the Christian Faith.*

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# British-Israelism

## Is It Christian?

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What is British-Israelism? According to its leading exponents and their voluminous literature, it is the theory that the Anglo-Saxon people—the British and Americans—are the direct descendants of the "Lost Ten Tribes" of Israel, and heirs of all the promises that God made to Abraham and his descendants. The Ten Tribes, according to this teaching, when their Kingdom of Israel was overthrown by Sargon of Assyria in 721 B.C., were carried off into captivity in Assyria and never returned. Instead of coming back to their own land as the Jews did later, we are told the Ten Tribes finally escaped from Assyria and wandered through Asia and Europe, journeying westward under different names until long afterwards they arrived in the British Isles as the Jutes, Angles, Danes, Saxons and Normans.

We are also told that after the destruction of Jerusalem, in 586 B.C., Jeremiah, the prophet, escaped to Egypt accompanied by the daughter of King Zedekiah. From there they went to Ireland where they found a colony of the tribe of Dan, and the princess, Tea Tephi, married the king of Ulster and became the ancestress of Queen Victoria and George VI. They also brought with them the pillar of stone which Jacob had used for a pillow at Bethel, and it is now under the Coronation Chair of the British kings in Westminster Abbey. So they assure us that the throne of England is the throne of David and the lion on the King's royal standard is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. And the British nation will never fall; it is destined of God to conquer the world and no weapon that is formed against it shall prosper. Before long, they tell us, Jerusalem will be the capital of the Empire and Christ will come in bodily form and reign in the Holy City on David's throne and the whole world will be "under the British banner of love, joy, peace, etc., because Israel is to be the heir of the world." (Pamphlet, "Why Britain Will Never Be Destroyed." Bolt. p. 4.)

That, in briefest outline, is the British-Israel doctrine, which we are assured is proved to be utterly true by Scripture, by language and by history, and a multitude of Bible texts are produced in order to prove it. Most of those who believe it are earnest, devout people, many of them members of our Christian churches. They are deeply sincere in their belief and thoroughly convinced that it is in accord with the teaching of both Old and New Testaments. But a careful study of the Bible and the pages of reliable history shows that they are profoundly mistaken and that this doctrine is fundamentally opposed to Christian truth.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE THEORY

Where and when did this theory arise? In 1649 an Englishman, John Sadler, published a book in which he claimed certain resemblances between Hebrew and English laws and customs. But the real founder of the theory was Richard Brothers, another Englishman, born in Newfoundland in 1757, who published about fifteen volumes in which he claimed that the English people were direct descendants of the "Lost Tribes of Israel." He was a half-pay officer of the British navy but he proclaimed himself to

be "the Nephew of the Almighty," descended from King David, and prophesied he would be revealed as "Prince of the Hebrews" on November 9, 1795. Israel would then be restored to the Holy Land and he would become ruler of the world. He was finally taken to a lunatic asylum and died in 1824 without having attained the throne of David.

Twenty-one years later, John Wilson, in a book, *Our Israelitish Origin*, placed the movement on its present basis, and other men, like Edward Hine and Piazzi Smith, the Astronomer Royal, took it up later. Hine gave about 300 alleged identifications of Britain with Israel and in a magazine of which he was editor he announced the immediate "National Salvation" of Israel, with himself as "the Deliverer out of Sion." That was in 1871, just 75 years ago, and the great deliverance has not yet arrived.

## CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP AGAINST IT

It may be well just here to record the fact that the dependable scholarship of the Christian world repudiates the whole theory. The recognized authorities on Hebrew history, language and religion are unanimous in their rejection of this theory as baseless and unsound. Professor George Rawlinson, the famous orientalist of Cambridge University, says of Hine's book, "It is not calculated to produce the slightest effect on the opinion of those competent to form one. Such effect as it may have can only be on the ignorant and unlearned, on those who are unaware of the absolute and entire diversity in language, physical type, religious opinions, and manners and customs, between the Israelites and the various races from which the English nation can be shown to be historically descended." Dr. Charles Foster Kent of Yale University, in his "History of the Hebrew People," says, "It is obvious that the wild theories concerning the fate of the 'Lost Ten Tribes of Israel' are entirely without foundation, since they never were lost." Prof. W. G. Jordan of Queen's University, has said, "The idea of ten tribes disappearing to be discovered two thousand five hundred years later in the form of a modern empire is absurd . . . it is not in such a narrow treatment of history, built upon imagined facts, baseless legends and outworn tribalisms, that the manifestations of God in history will be vindicated." With these authorities all other scholars are agreed. As the *Encyclopædia Britannica* says in its famous 11th Edition, "The theory . . . rests on premises which are deemed by scholars—both theological and anthropological—to be utterly unsound." And the *Jewish Encyclopædia* condemns the whole theory for its "wild guesswork about historical origins and philological analogies" and its "slavish interpretations of selected phases of prophecy."

## I. "LOST TRIBES" NEVER WERE LOST

Why has Christian scholarship come to this conclusion regarding the British-Israel teaching? What are the facts as revealed in the Bible and human history? Let us look first at the Old Testament, and we shall find that the Ten Tribes of Israel were never lost at all.

When the Ten Tribes revolted under Jeroboam and formed the Northern Kingdom of Israel, a faithful remnant of them, including the tribe of Levi, remained faithful, deserted idolatrous Israel and came to Jerusalem to worship, some of them settling in Judah and Benjamin permanently. (2 Chron. 11: 13-16.) "And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their coasts . . . and after them out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers. So they strengthened the Kingdom of Judah and made Rehoboam the

son of Solomon strong." Twenty years later in the reign of Asa many more Israelites flocked to Judah from the Northern Kingdom from Ephraim and Manasseh and Simeon. (2 Chron. 15: 9.)

Then in 734 and 722 B.C. came the invasions of Israel by the Assyrians, and the leading people by thousands were carried off to captivity, leaving the majority of the common people to till the land and occupy the cities. How do we know they were left there? Because two or three years later King Hezekiah of Judah started a religious revival and invited the Israelites from Dan to Beersheba to come and keep the Passover at Jerusalem, and multitudes of them came. And after eating the Passover and destroying the idols and heathen altars all over Judah and Ephraim and Manasseh, they went back to their own cities in Israel. (2 Chron. 30: 18-25; 31: 1-2.)

Then, later still, King Josiah began a great reformation and in 2 Chron., Chap. 35, we have a full account of the great feast at which priests and Levites and the people of both Judah and Israel were present. Then came the two deportations of the Jews to Babylon and the Fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. when many Israelites were carried off with the Jews and they were reckoned together as "ALL ISRAEL" (1 Chron. 9: 1).

### BOTH ISRAEL AND JUDAH COME BACK

Fifty years later came the Return from Exile, under edict from Cyrus, King of Persia, including captives from both Assyria and Babylon. Ezra 2: 2 tells us that the long list of 50,000 people given in the whole chapter is "The number of the men of the people of Israel," thus calling those from Judah and the towns of the Northern Kingdom, like Bethel and Ai, all "Israelites." In verse 70, Ezra informs us that "all Israel dwelt in their cities." Then when the returned exiles had finished building "the house of God," we are definitely told in Ezra 6: 16-17, that "the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity kept the dedication of the house of God with joy" and offered cattle and sheep in sacrifice and "for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel."

Later on, about 458 B.C., Ezra himself led about 2,000 men and their families—approximately 6,000 to 8,000 people—to Jerusalem, including "some of the children of Israel." He tells us in Chap. 7: 28, "I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me." And, later still, in 445 B.C., Nehemiah informs us in Chap. 7: 73, that "all Israel dwelt in their cities; and when the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities." Ezra also states that while he prayed and confessed the sins of the people "there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children." (Ezra 10: 1.) Compare also Ezra 2: 3, 28, 70; 8: 25-30; 9: 1; 1 Chron. 9: 2. These and other similar passages prove conclusively that many people of both Israel and Judah returned, and both united in laying the foundations of the new Judaism. And from that time on they were called indiscriminately "Jews" and "Israelites." Our British-Israel friends insist that the people of the ten tribes are never called Jews in the Bible, and that those of Judah and Benjamin were never called Israelites, but always Jews. They also claim that those who came back from exile under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah were Jews of the Southern Kingdom only. But the fact is that in the Book of Ezra those who returned are called "Jews" only eight times and "Israelites" forty times. In the Book of Nehemiah they are called "Jews" eleven times and "Israelites" twenty-two times.

Thus the Old Testament clearly shows that the ten tribes were not lost at all, but the majority of them came back to their homeland after

the Exile and settled down again with the large number of those who had been left behind when the leaders and upper classes had been carried off by the Assyrian conquerors.

### NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

Let us now glance at the New Testament. What light have Christ and His disciples to throw on this subject? In the New Testament the words "Israel" and "Jew" are used interchangeably to describe the same people. The word "Israel" is used 83 times as the name of the united people and the word "Jew" 174 times. From the very birth of Jesus the New Testament speaks of "the children of Israel" as being in the "land of Israel," or Palestine. When the angel Gabriel announced His birth to Mary, she sang that "God hath given help to His servant Israel" (Luke 1: 54). Zachariah and John the Baptist and Simcon all speak of Christ being made manifest to "Israel" (Luke 1: 68; John 1: 31). Jesus called Nathaniel "an Israelite indeed," and Nicodemus "a master in Israel." The multitude said of His miracles that "it was never so seen in Israel," referring to their own time and place (Matt. 9: 33). They called Him "King of Israel" as He rode into Jerusalem (John 12: 13). Matthew calls the silver given to Judas, "The price of Him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value" (27: 9). Jesus told His disciples to "go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," though they never went outside Palestine on that mission (Matt. 10: 6). (Compare Matt. 15: 24; 10: 23.)

### ISRAEL STILL IN PALESTINE

Peter at Pentecost addressed his hearers as "Ye men of Israel" (Acts 2: 22). Also at Solomon's porch (Acts 3: 12). Peter and John, in Acts 4: 27, declare "Of a truth in this city against thy Holy Servant Jesus whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together." Gamaliel addressed the Council as "Men of Israel" (Acts 5: 35). Paul at Antioch said to his hearers, "Men of Israel and ye that fear God, hearken: The God of *this people Israel* chose our fathers," . . . (Acts 13: 16, 17). He told Agrippa how "Our twelve tribes earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain" the promise of God (Acts 26: 7). Did he mean a horde of people who at that time, somewhere in the heart of Asia or Europe, under the name of Scythians or Jutes or Angles or Saxons, were heading for Britain? Or was James thinking of Teutons and Celts lost in the forests of Germany or Ireland when he addressed his Epistle to "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad"? (James 1: 1.) The fact is the location of the twelve tribes in New Testament times was well known to the Apostles, for they were living here and there in colonies throughout the Roman Empire, and the Day of Pentecost saw them thronging together from all parts to listen to Peter preach the Gospel to them as "Men of Israel." There was no thought of them as being "lost" anywhere. Paul himself is a standing refutation of the idea that Jews and Israelites were separate peoples in New Testament times. Listen to him! "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I" (2 Cor. 11: 22). "I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city of Galicia" (Acts 21: 39). He was a Hebrew, an Israelite and a Jew all in one. Jesus was called both "King of the Jews" and "King of Israel" (Matt. 2: 2; John 1: 49; 12: 13). The disciples asked Him after His resurrection if He would "at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1: 6). How could He restore the Kingdom to a people lost for centuries in the unknown wilds of Asia and Europe? Plainly the Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, proves this whole idea of "Lost Tribes" to be nothing but a fantastic fairy tale with no foundation whatever in Scripture.

## II. B-I THEORY HAS NO FOUNDATION IN HISTORY

In most of their literature the British-Israelites make a great show of historical evidence in support of their theory. But actually the so-called historic proofs are simply the manipulation of baseless legends, wild guesses and fantastic inventions that contradict the findings of reputable historians. As Professor Jórdan of Queen's University declared, "We can find no historical basis for such a fantastic view: it is so much in the air that it is not amenable to argument."

Our British-Israel friends inform us that the Israelites did not return to Palestine from Assyria, but escaped by crossing the Euphrates and, skirting the Black Sea, came into Europe where they became known as the "Scythians." But for this there is not a shred of historical proof. The Scythians were not a Semitic people, and the Israelites were. They also tell us that the Cimmerians of South Russia were another section of the Israelites who settled in Wales and were known as the "Cymry." But the Scythians and the Cimmerians were two different peoples altogether. The "Cambridge Ancient History" tells how the Scythian hordes drove the Cimmerians southward into Assyria and Armenia about 720 B.C., just when the Israelites were being carried out of their own land by Sargon.

As Dr. Parker, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Interpretation in McMaster University, says, "It is doubtful whether the annals of anthropology contain a more amazing statement than that the Hebrew exiles of 722 B.C. are to be identified with the Scythians. The only thing more amazing is that there are honest and sincere people who apparently believe it. Such a proposition flies in the face of all known facts of history and defies all the principles of racial classification. To state that the negroes of the Southern United States turned into Chinamen in less than a generation would be no more audacious and no more untrue." Read the article on the Scythians in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* if you wish to know who the Scythians were and what happened to them.

## ZEDEKIAH NOT IN THE ROYAL LINE

And what of the story of Jeremiah and the daughter of Zedekiah whom he "brought to Ireland and married to the King of Ulster"? Well, it is just about as authentic as the Scythian myth. In fact there is just as much truth in the stories of Little Red Riding Hood and Snow White or Little Black Sambo. There is not a shred of evidence that Jeremiah or the daughter of Zedekiah ever left Egypt after they went there in 586 B.C. Chapter 44 of Jeremiah gives us the last glimpse of the great prophet in Tahpanhes in Egypt vainly trying to win his people from idolatry. Nothing whatever is known about him after that, and there is just as much evidence that he went to Timbuctoo or the North Pole as that he went to Ireland.

In any case the royal line of descent did not go through Zedekiah, and all talk about the King of England being descended from David of Israel is utterly futile. The fact is that Zedekiah was an interloper, a "Quisling," a puppet of Nebuchadnezzar, put on the throne in place of the rightful king Jehoiachin who was carried into captivity by the Assyrians. The story is told in 2 Kings, Chap. 24, where we are informed "the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, his father's brother, king in his stead and changed his name to Zedekiah." And in the royal genealogy of Matt. 1, verse 11, Zedekiah is completely ignored and the line is carried down through Shealtiel, the son born to Jehoiachin in Babylon. So the boasted descent of Britain's kings from David is pure fabrication. Zedekiah and his daughter were not in the royal line at all. The royal rights are in the last link of the chain who was Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, who alone is King in the Kingdom of God which is to last for ever. (Luke 1: 32.)

Here it may be said, with all Christian courtesy, that the genealogical chart presented by the British-Israelites as connecting the royal House of Britain with that of David of Israel, is the strangest compilation known to students of history. It actually includes amongst the descendants of David such characters as Thor and Odin and Frea, the old Norse divinities, and Dardanus, the mythical founder of Troy, and Priam and Hector and Memnon and Aeneas, the mythical heroes of the ancient Greek classics. But sane historians do not include the gods and demi-gods of ancient mythology in their genealogies of modern peoples or their rulers. We might just as well construct the genealogy of the British monarchs out of such names as Robin Hood, Gulliver, Hiawatha, Little Bo-Peep and Jack the Giant-Killer. The whole thing is so fantastic as to be really ludicrous, and the most amazing thing about it is that there seem to be people who actually believe it.

### III. BRITISH-ISRAELISM MISINTERPRETS PROPHECY

Conspicuous in its teaching is the British-Israel misuse and misinterpretation of Bible prophecy. A fundamental tenet of this theory is that the covenant God made with Abraham was not fulfilled in the days before the captivity of Israel, but is now being fulfilled in the British Empire, and only through the British people can it be fulfilled completely.

But there were a number of the promises made to Abraham already fulfilled before the fall of Israel. The land which God promised to Abraham when Lot went off toward Sodom, the land of Canaan, was given to his descendants when Joshua conquered and divided it amongst the tribes of Israel. The promise that his seed would be as the stars in heaven for multitude (Gen. 15: 5; 26: 4), which we are now told applies to the British people, was already fulfilled before ever there was a king in Israel. At least, Moses said so in Deut. 1: 10: "The Lord hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude," and Hebrews 11: 12 confirms this, adding, "as the sand by the seashore innumerable." Why claim that as a prophecy of the British Empire, when it was fulfilled before Israel became a kingdom?

Furthermore, all these prophecies which speak of "A great and mighty nation," "A nation and a company of nations," "the Lord shall make thee the head and not the tail," "thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow" etc., and which are applied to the British people by this theory, were spoken of the *whole twelve tribes* of Israel and not of the ten alone. They were also to be fulfilled in the land of Canaan, the very land which was promised to Abraham. See Gen. 17: 8; 26: 3; 35: 11, 12; Deut. 28: 11 and 34: 1-4. In Deut. 34: 1-4 the geographical boundaries of the land are given to Moses, and God says, "This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed." And that is where the prophecies of their greatness were fulfilled long before there was a king or kingdom in Israel. (Deut. 1: 8-10; 10: 22.) It is simply a direct perversion of Scripture to interpret these texts as meaning the British Empire or any other modern people. They have just as much application to the people of China or India or France or Germany as they have to the British, and that is none at all. They apply directly to the twelve tribes of Israel settled in Canaan and nowhere else.

### PROPHECIES WERE CONDITIONAL

Another fact that must be emphasized very clearly is that all these prophecies of Israel's greatness and permanence were conditional. They were strictly conditioned upon Israel's keeping her part of the Covenant with the God of Abraham and their fathers.

British-Israelism makes a great deal of the text in which Jehovah says, "David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the House of Israel" (Jer. 33: 17). They say that if the throne of David had disappeared entirely and the royal succession had ended, God would have been a liar, therefore the dynasty of David was only "apparently interrupted" by the fall of Jerusalem and was "re-established simultaneously over Israel elsewhere." (*B-I Truth*, pp. 181-2.) But the throne of David as a political entity *did* perish, and the Bible says so. Psalm 89, written in Exile, quotes the promise made to David that his throne would be established for ever, and then says positively, in vv. 38-44, "But thou hast cast off and rejected. Thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast abhorred the covenant of thy servant; thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground . . . Thou hast made his brightness to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground." That is the definite statement of the Book, but the British-Israel writers and preachers do not quote it; they avoid it as they would the plague. They ignore completely the fact that the promises of God were morally conditioned. Read the 18th Chapter of Jeremiah, in which God speaks, saying that if the people do evil and obey not His voice, He will repent of the good He has promised them, and punish them. In Deut. 28: 15 Moses declares, "And the Lord shall make thee the head and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath: *if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God*, which I command thee this day, to observe and do them . . . But if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee . . . until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly" (vv. 15-20). David himself ought to know something about the promises of God to him. Listen to him on his death-bed telling Solomon, his son, to be sure and keep God's commandments, that God may establish His word, "*If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and all their soul, there shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel*" (1 Kings 2: 4). Did Solomon do that? Did Rehoboam his son, or Jeroboam the king of the Ten Tribes? No! They disobeyed, and they suffered the consequences, and the throne of Israel perished off the face of the earth as God had declared it would, in Deut. 28: 36-68. And the nation of Israel perished when Titus and his armies overthrew Jerusalem and tore down its Temple in A.D. 70. That was the end of Israel as a political entity, and the only kingdom that succeeded to the heritage of its promises was, and is, the great spiritual kingdom of Christ, of which Jesus spoke when He said, "The Kingdom of God is within you."

### PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

But, you may say, are the promises made to Abraham never to be fulfilled? Yes. As we have seen, some of them were already fulfilled before the days of Saul or David. And the others are being fulfilled, under the New Covenant, to the spiritual seed of Abraham—the Christian Church. Jesus told the Israelites of His day that the Kingdom of God would be taken from them "and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21: 43.) "Yes," say our British-Israel friends, "but that nation is Britain." But I prefer to take the words of Jesus Himself, when He said to His disciples, the first members of His Church, "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to *give you* the Kingdom." (Luke 12: 32.) Peter also leaves no doubt about what nation it is, when he tells the Churches of Asia Minor, "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Peter 2: 9), a race, a priest-

hood, a nation and a people who have entered into the inheritance of the race and priesthood and nation that were rejected because of their faithlessness and repudiation of their Messiah and King.

Paul puts the matter plainly when he states in Gal. 3, that the Old Covenant has entirely passed away and the New Covenant has taken its place. He shows that the Christian Church is the New Israel and heir to the promises made to Abraham. In v. 7 he says, "Know, therefore, that they that are of faith, the same are the sons of Abraham." In v. 29 he adds, "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Compare Romans 9: 6-8.) In Christ there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, either in admission to the Kingdom of God, or in privilege or destiny. If the Israelites are ever to enter the Kingdom it will have to be by faith in Christ and by way of His Church, like other people.

#### IV. BRITISH-ISRAELISM A PERVERSION OF THE GOSPEL

British-Israelites insist that they alone truly preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. They claim that the Kingdom of God is a geographical, political kingdom with military power and material possessions and an actual throne to be set up at Jerusalem with Christ as King, or a descendant of David as His representative. They tell us "The Kingdom is a national organization based upon a biological foundation; that of the Anglo-Saxon (or Isaac) seed of Abraham" (*National Message*, 13th Dec., 1930). They look for "the early coming of Christ to take the throne of David, on which at present, 'Anointed unto the Lord to be chief governor,' our beloved King George now sits as vice-regent. (Isa. 19: 19-20.)" They declare that Britain is "the nation which God swore should endure for ever"; it "has been redeemed and is carrying out His purpose and plan which He has set in motion at the beginning of the world." (*A Synopsis of B-I Beliefs*.) It is "the chosen instrument of God to lead the world to Him. In unmistakable terms the Bible is emphatic on this point." So they declare "Britain is the centre of God's Kingdom, and His Church is established within that Kingdom." (*What is the B-I Position?*) "Therefore, being Israel, 'The Kingdom of the Lord,' 'the apple of God's eye,' the British Empire is to grow, like the 'mustard seed' until the whole earth comes under its banner of love, joy, peace, etc." (*Why Great Britain will Stand For Ever*.)

William Pascoe Goard, Secretary of the B-I World Federation, said in his book, *The Message of the Bible to the Covenant (British) People of God*, (p. 3), "Let the Kingship of the Lord over Israel in Britain and America, enter your heart and mind. For it is in very deed and truth the fact that He is our King and the Rock of our salvation." "Our King!" "The Rock of our salvation!" Is not the Lord just as much King of France and China, and even Germany, as He is of Britain? Listen again: "Britain is the centre of God's Kingdom . . . London is the heart of Britain. And in the heart of Britain stands the Royal Exchange—symbol of the material wealth and substance of the Kingdom" (*God's Spiritual Kingdom*, by A.R.H., p. 8). "The British people are a people in covenant relation with God. And since Christ died as Redeemer of His people, they are a redeemed people." (Ib., p. 6.) One of the reasons given in the booklet, "Why Great Britain Will Never Be Destroyed," is found on page 4, "Because the British pray, 'Help Thy Servants, whom Thou hast redeemed,' whereas Israel is the only nation Jesus came to redeem. Isa. 44: 21; Jer. 31: 11." Consider this also, from "Professor" Odlum's book, *God's Covenant Man*, page 167: "God is the Redeemer of Israel and Judah, but not of Turkey or Persia or China, for the very good reason that He never had them a special and chosen people under the law." And this, from page 121: "No other people on earth at any time have been given the message

of salvation to mankind. *This is absolutely and irrevocably true.* And this is the reason, the alone reason, why Britain and her blood kindred are the true gospel carriers today. *All others are imposters.*" And friend Goard endorsed this when he said, "The nation is the Rock on which the Lord will build His Church. The Kingdom-nation is a redeemed nation. . . . That nation is the object of the Redemption wrought out by the Lord. Therefore, the sins of that nation will never be the cause of her destruction. Israel-Britain is the Bride of the Lamb." (*The Present Truth*, p. 27.) And speaking to an audience of 3,000 in Massey Hall, Toronto, the Rev. E. J. Springett, their Dominion Commissioner, said, "Every single one of you has your heart and soul and garments washed in the blood of the everlasting Lamb. Remember that you are Israel, and Israel redeemed."

Think of it! Britain is Israel. "Israel is the only nation Jesus came to redeem," and every member of that nation is already redeemed. "The sins of that nation will never be the cause of her destruction! Israel-Britain is the Bride of the Lamb!" Is that the Gospel of the Kingdom of God? Is that what Jesus meant when He said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature"? I know that British-Israelism declares "there is not a kingdom, nor a nation, nor a people on earth which is not included in the great plan of the ages." But it is "through the agency of Israel as God's ministering Kingdom and nation that the blessings of the Kingdom must come to them." (*What is the B-I Position?* p. 2.) In other words, they teach that salvation must come to other nations through Britain alone, because it is Israel. But did not Jesus say "Salvation is of the Jews"? (John 4: 22.)

#### DOCTRINE OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

The fact is that British-Israelism is exactly the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day. This is exactly the kind of Kingdom they believed in and were eagerly expecting. The throne of David at Jerusalem, the Messianic King on it ruling the world with the help of the Jews as His chosen people. Rome, Greece and the Barbarian world all under their banner—a swollen ideal of nationalism dominating the earth with the Jews on top. And that was the very ideal which Jesus repudiated and which He said was utterly opposed to His Kingdom of love and service. "My Kingdom is not of this world" He said to Pilate, "if my Kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight." (John 18: 36.) "The Kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17: 20-21). Jesus proclaimed a spiritual kingdom in which God would reign in the hearts of men and all their affairs, a kingdom entirely opposed to what the Jews were expecting. No throne but the human heart, no boundaries but the human race, no laws but the law of God, and no force or power but the power of love. It was because Jesus repudiated their idea of the Kingdom of God and insisted on a Kingdom of love and service and sacrifice, because He condemned the narrow nationalism and materialism of the Jews, they killed Him as an impostor and enemy of the nation. The fact is that the British-Israel Gospel is a sheer perversion of the Gospel of Christ and a reversion to the intolerant nationalism of the men who crucified Him on Calvary's cross. In the Kingdom of God there are no favourites, for God is no respecter of persons. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither Scythian nor barbarian, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3: 28-29.) The way into the Kingdom of God is not through citizenship in Britain or America or Canada or any other nation; it is through personal faith in Jesus Christ and loving obedience to the will of God. "Except a man be born again," whether he be British or German or Hottentot, "he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

## "PROOF" FROM LANGUAGES

Amongst the many so-called "proofs" of British-Israelism outside the Bible is the alleged similarity of the Hebrew and English languages. In the Handbook, *British-Israel Truth*, on page 125, we are told that the English language "is Hebrew in many of its roots and much of its arrangement." "Professor" Odium, in his book *God's Covenant Man*, gives several pages of English and Hebrew words of similar sound and meaning which he claims "show that the people who used that language in the British Isles before the time of Christ were Hebrews." (p. 72.) On page 66 he says, "the construction of the Hebrew, the old British, and the English of the King James' Translation of the Bible are more similar than any other known language is to either the present or old British construction."

But Dr. Parker of McMaster University, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Literature, replies to this, "No man in his right mind should make such an assertion. There is not a competent philologist in the world who will support him. . . . Ordinary derivatives from Hebrew roots are so exceedingly rare that not even one university professor out of ten could mention five of them if asked to do so on the spur of the moment." And he adds "it is highly doubtful that there was one single word in Saxon, exclusive of borrowed Bible names . . . that can be traced to a Hebrew root." (*The Ten Tribes and All That*, pp. 47, 48.) Even the official statement of the British-Israelites, "God Omnipotent," says on page 50, "There is really no argument from language." To say that the word "British" comes from two Hebrew words, "Brith" and "Ish," meaning "Covenant" and "Man," and, therefore, the British are God's "Covenant People," or that the word "Saxon" comes from "Isaac's son," is simply childish. Any good dictionary will show the true origin of these words and prove the folly of such pretended scholarship. They also tell us that Dane, Danube, Danaan are Hebrew words, therefore the Tuatha da Danaan who came to Ireland before Jeremiah were the tribe of Dan, and the Danes of today are descendants of Dan of the Ten Tribes, who came from Assyria by way of the Danube. Well, what about "danger" and "dandy" and "dandelion" and "dandruff" and "dangler" and "dancer"? Are they all Hebrew words too? All relatives of the Tribe of Dan? You see how this kind of argument leads to utterest nonsense.

## JACOB'S PILLOW AND THE CORONATION STONE

Another supposed proof of the British-Israel theory is the Coronation Stone in the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey. It is claimed to be the actual stone which Jacob used as a pillow at Bethel. (Gen. 28: 18.) They assure us that Jeremiah, the prophet, brought it with him from Egypt when he came to Ireland, and it was used as a royal seat at the coronation of the Irish kings for close on 1,000 years. Then it was taken to Scotland via Iona, and afterwards brought to England by Edward I, where it still remains. This claim is bolstered by appeal to ancient Irish legends and so-called "Spanish Records," etc., but the early Irish legendary *Book of Conquests* states it was originally brought to Ireland from Scotland. And the leading geologists of Britain today have officially certified that it is simply a piece of Scottish sandstone similar to the rocks of Iona, and that there has never been found any similar stone in Ireland or Egypt or Jacob's homeland of Palestine.

## THE PYRAMID FALLACY—"THE BIBLE IN STONE"

Another stone monument which British-Israelism acclaims as an overwhelming proof of their theory is the Great Pyramid of Egypt. They call it "The Bible in Stone," and assert that God's plan of the ages is revealed

in it. They claim it is the "Pillar" spoken of in Isaiah 19: 19. But the Hebrew word "Matsebah" simply means a "standing pillar" and has nothing whatever to do with the pyramids. The idea that God designed it and inspired the pagan priests of Egypt to built into its measurements a prophecy and plan of all the great events of Israel's and Britain's history is accepted as convincing proof of the B-I theory. By means of these measurements they have professed to predict the great events of world history and even the end of the "Times of the Gentiles," "the Coming of Christ," and the "end of the world." So we have had set forth as calamitous dates the 29th of May, 1928, the 16th of September, 1936, and the 27th of November 1939, but they have all come and gone and the Gentiles are still flourishing and the "Second Coming" has not taken place. And now we are told that August 20, 1953, will be the date of the end of the first stage of the Millenium. (*Witness of the Great Pyramid*, Stewart, pp. 195-6.)

This kind of thing began about 75 years ago when C. Piazzi Smith, Astronomer Royal for Scotland, figured out what he called the "Sacred Egyptian Cubit" of 25 inches, and the "Sacred Inch," and professed to discover that all the measurements of the Pyramid were genuine prophecies of times and dates of world events. But the British Association sent out Sir Flinders Petrie, the great Egyptologist, to check the measurements of Prof. Smith. He found that Smith was wrong in his measurements, which spoiled the accuracy of his "cubit" and "inch" and proved his prophecies all wrong. As Sir W. Flinders Petrie says, in his book *Seventy Years in Archeology* (pp. 34-5), "Hence all theorizing about the days in the year being represented was entirely erroneous. . . . The theories as to the size of the pyramid are thus proved entirely impossible, and this is confirmed by the later details of survey made by the Egyptian Government. The fantastic theories, however, are still poured out and the theorists will assert that the facts correspond to their requirements. It is useless to state the truth of the matter, as it has no effect on those who are subject to this type of hallucination." And he adds how he and his friends were highly amused by finding one of these theorists trying "to file down the granite boss in the antechamber to the size required for the theory."

It is well known that the pyramids were built by the priests of Egypt not only as tombs for the kings and their families, but also as great sundials and astronomical observatories by which they observed the heavenly bodies, calculated the times and seasons, made their calendar, and set the dates for the sowing and planting of the crops by the people. Using the Great Pyramid as a sundial the priests figured the hours of the day, the weeks, the months and the years. But the British-Israelite enthusiasts have ignored all this and turned the pyramids into a fantastic inspired almanac of more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in the philosophy of any sane student of history or Sacred Scripture.

### DANGEROUS INFLUENCE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

Some time ago in reading the late Lord Tweedsmuir's book, *Men and Deeds*, I ran across a striking instance of the evil influence of this British-Israel theory in world affairs. Checking his statement, on pp. 16-18, with Churchill's story on page 407 of his *World Crisis*, there stood revealed the almost incredible fact that this erroneous teaching was largely responsible for the prolongation of the first World War for over two years, with all its horrors and loss of life and property.

In 1916, when Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty had urged the seizure of Constantinople, and the naval assault on Gallipoli was suddenly suspended because three British warships were sunk at once by Turkish mines, Admiral de Robeck, the British commander, cabled the Government that he would not continue the attack until the Army was

ready to cooperate. Churchill's story of the Cabinet meeting which followed is very brief. He tells how he was in favour of pushing the attack at once and capturing Constantinople, but was opposed strenuously by Lord Fisher. Fisher argued that there was no need to make such haste, as the British could not lose anyhow, because they were the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and had the Almighty with them. As Churchill quotes him: "You are very wrong to excite yourself. Do try and remember that we are the lost Ten Tribes of Israel. We are sure to win. I know I am an optimist. Always have been, thank God. Send no more telegrams. Let it alone." (Churchill, *The World Crisis*, pp. 407-408.)

And Fisher prevailed; Churchill was over-ruled and the Turks were allowed four weeks more to recover and prepare for the final assault which was lost. Here is the comment of Lord Tweedsmuir on the whole thing: "It altered the whole course of the war, for at that moment Turkey was, in the most literal truth, at her last gasp. We have the evidence of Enver; we have the evidence of half a dozen Germans on the spot. She was almost out of munitions, and her resistance that day was the last effort of which she was capable in defence. I have talked to a distinguished German diplomat who was then in Constantinople, and he described to me the complete despair of the Turkish Government and their German advisers. They believed it was mathematically certain that in a day or two Constantinople would be in British hands. When they heard that the British fleet had given up the attack they could not believe their ears; it seemed to them the most insane renunciation of a certain victory."

Then Lord Tweedsmuir goes on to say that if the advice of Churchill had been taken and Constantinople captured, Turkey would have been out of the war, Bulgaria would never have come in, Russia would have had her needs supplied and been kept in close touch with her western Allies and probably no Bolshevik revolution would have taken place, or been very different, Austria would soon have been put out of action, and the war would have ended in 1916 instead of dragging on to November 1918. But Fisher's infatuation with British-Israelism gained the day and hundreds of thousands of men were slaughtered unnecessarily because of it.

And now, when world peace and security depend so largely upon continued friendship and co-operation between the great powers of the world, we find the British-Israelites carrying on a persistent propaganda against Russia, misusing the ancient prophets of Israel to predict inevitable war with the Soviet peoples. This is a continuation of the vigorous campaign they instituted when Germany attacked Russia during the recent war, protesting against the British Empire giving aid to the Russian people in the hour of their direst need. That kind of propaganda is most dangerous and unchristian, and can only foster international suspicion and enmity with most tragic consequences to follow. It not only degrades the Bible to the level of an inspired almanac, but it is a definite provocation to another international holocaust worse than that which is just ended.

### A SERIOUS DANGER TO THE CHURCH

Having examined this British-Israel doctrine from the standpoints of Scripture, history, language and common sense, we are forced to the conclusion that there is no foundation for it in any of them, and that it is rife with most serious dangers to the individual Christian and the Church. As Dr. W. H. Smith has well said, in his excellent book, *The Ten Tribes Never Lost*, "It is driving a wedge into congregations. Its advocates are a disruptive force in many congregations, as they use the various meetings for their propaganda. They do not hesitate to brand the ministers who do not believe their theory as 'modernists,' 'heretics,' 'disbelievers in God's Word.' They hold services at the time of regular church worship, although

claiming they are not a Church. A choice must be made. This issue is clear. It is whether we shall look backward and seek to restore the old order on the fanciful basis of British-Israelism, or whether we shall look forward and seek to establish Christ's Kingdom on the basis of brotherhood in Him."

But this gospel of Nationalism, this glorified Imperialism, which arrogates to the British people the place of power and dominance over all other peoples, is very far from the Gospel of Christ, the Good News of the Kingdom of God in which all differences of nationality, race and tongue are completely submerged in the brotherhood of Christ. The old narrow nationalisms and racial prejudices and religious antagonisms and social divisions are doomed when Christ begins to build His Kingdom of peace and goodwill in this world. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," said Jesus. It is a spiritual Kingdom of "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." It lives in the heart of every man who loves and obeys the Christ, whether he be white or black, yellow or red, Jew or Gentile, learned or ignorant. Love is the atmosphere of that Kingdom and the only conditions of entrance into it are faith in Christ and allegiance to His will.

If the British Empire is strong today and highly favoured amongst all the nations, it is not because it is ancient "Israel" or a "Chosen People," but simply because by many of its people Christ is honoured and loved and obeyed. And the more they love Him and seek to obey Him as Saviour and Lord, the greater and stronger and more favoured will Britain become.

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